Indians' Troubles Blaimed On 'Greedy Whites, Prosperity'

Curry, Harris Deny Reservation Poverty, Defend Official Policy

Reginald O. Curry, chairman of the Ute Tribal Business committee, Thursday, April 13, told Governor J. Bracken Lee that "greedy whites" are attempting to influence the Indians in an effort to break up tribal property, while Carl J. Harris, state welfare commission field supervisor, supporting the contentions of Mr. Curry, explained that too much prosperity, not poverty, was the cause of reservation unrest.

He attributed the controversy to unexpended tribal funds, for which, he said, some Indians are now clamoring.

Both were principal speakers at the Business committee's meeting with Governor Lee, which it requested to clarify its position in relation to the current Uintah and Ouray reservation controversy.

Mr. Harris agreed that a division of tribal assets "would be completely ruinous for the Indians.

"He would spend like a king and live like one for the duration of his funds, then go on state welfare aid," Mr. Harris said.

Mr. Harris and Mr. Curry both emphasized that Ute Indians "are not going hungry."

Indians not cared for by the tribal welfare funds are receiving aid from the state, and are well clothed and free from serious hardship, Mr. Curry said.

He continued that more than $286,000 in tribal funds have been loaned to tribal members at 3 per cent interest, and records show there has been less than one per cent delinquency in repayment of loans.

He urged the governor not to support a blanket reform act affecting all reservations.

"Reservation problems should be solved individually. What is needed to solve the problems of the Navaho, for example, is not true for our Ute reservation," he said.

Delegates to the Interstate-Indian conference in Minneapolis last month recognized the need for approaching the Indian problem at a reservation level, and embraced it in an announced program.

Mr. Harris, acting upon orders from the state welfare commission, visited the Uintah and Ouray reservation two weeks ago for a personal tour of the reservation and an on-the-spot investigation of actual conditions.

However, reliable sources on the reservation this week were questioning Mr. Harris' "intensive tour," pointing out that his individual contacts were limited, that the reservation tour was supervised, and that he disregarded invitations to accompany others over the reservation.